



SHAPING BURLINGTON

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# Civic Engagement

A presentation by  
Shaping Burlington  
to the City of Burlington's  
Budget and Corporate Services Committee

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# Shape Burlington Recommendation

## **Engagement: Transform the City Hall culture to promote active citizenship and civic engagement**

Promoting active citizen engagement and meaningful public dialogue requires a culture shift at City Hall. A crucial first step is the development of an **Engagement Charter** – a plain language policy document developed with public involvement that incorporates benchmarks and accountabilities and describes the value, purpose and opportunities for citizens to influence city policies.

The charter would explain how to navigate City Hall and its services. It should stipulate best practices for various kinds of public consultation and affirm the city's commitment to inform citizens and respond to their ideas and contributions. It would address the question of reaching out to a diverse population.

The charter would incorporate an **early notification system** to provide citizens and groups information about meetings, events and issues and allow a reasonable amount of time to understand, discuss and develop positions before decisions are made. A guide for its development could be the Edmonton Public Involvement process.

## **A Vision of Burlington: Welcome to the Learning City\***

- A city that understands itself
- A city that is comfortable with change
- A city that feels palpably connected to a shared vision of the future
- A city that opens itself up to evolution and adaptation
- A city that has a mature relationship with the risks associated with innovation
- A city that embraces its own inventiveness and the talents and sincerity of its residents

**\*MASS LBP**

# **Civic Engagement in Burlington**

## **Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation\***

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

### **\*IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) Core Values**

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed the "IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation" for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes. These core values were developed over a two-year period with broad international input to identify those aspects of public participation which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries. The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

## **Engagement Charter: Core Principles**

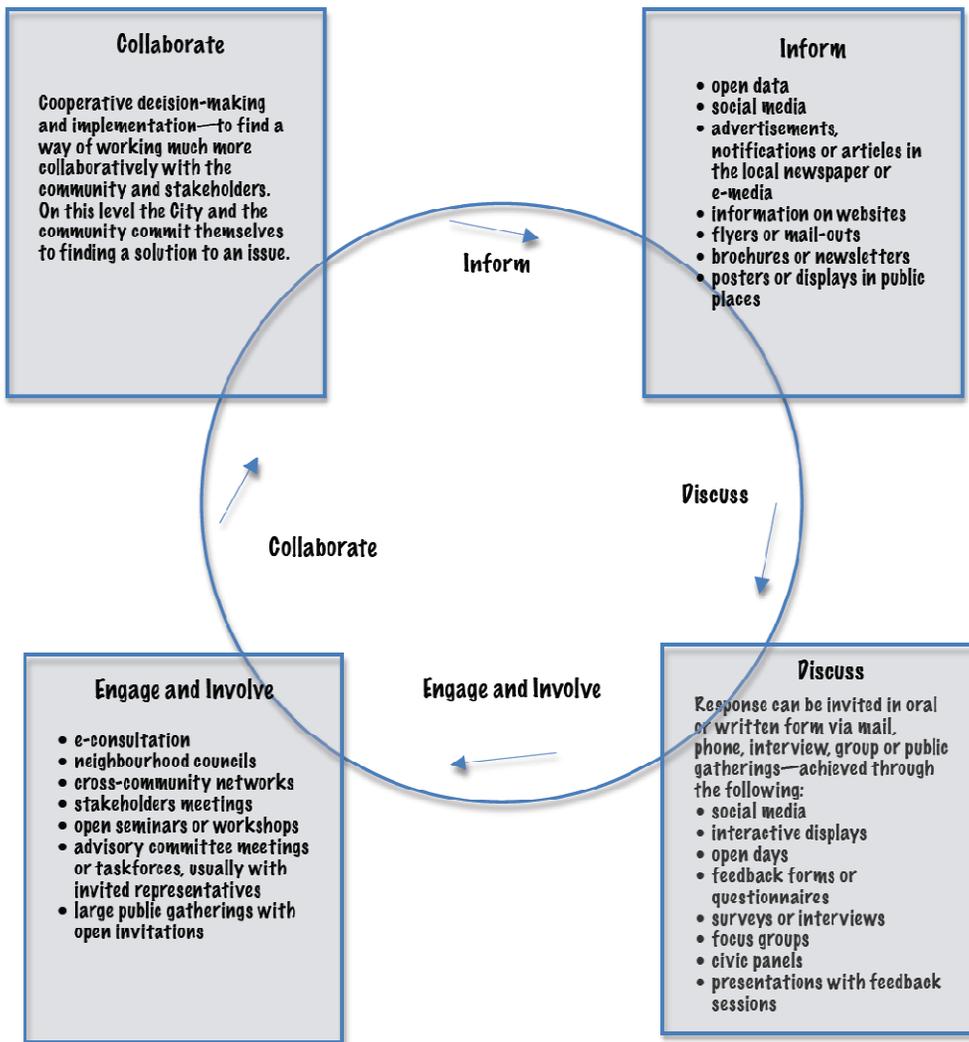
- Enable citizens to have a meaningful and timely say
- Ensure barriers to participation are addressed
- Explore, encourage, listen to and respect different view-points
- Be open, accessible, accountable and ethical
- Create opportunities for everyone to participate in decision-making
- Be clear about the level of engagement for each situation

***Civic engagement*** is defined in the literature as individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. It can take many forms, such as:

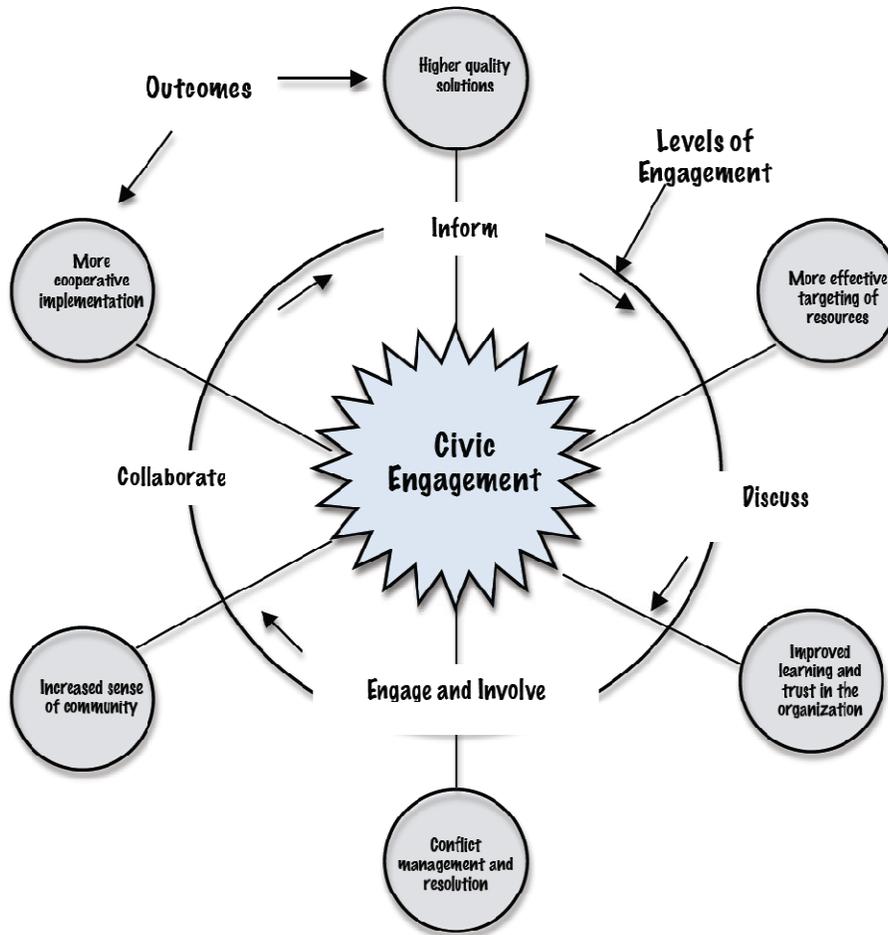
- individual volunteerism
- organizational involvement
- electoral participation
- working with others in a community to solve a problem
- interaction with institutions of representative democracy

In its purest form, civic engagement is the sense of personal responsibility that individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community.

## Levels of Engagement: "How do we get there?"



## A Model of an Engagement Charter



***Civic Engagement*** can only be achieved through an open and accountable community consultation process whereby individuals and groups can participate in decision-making and influence the outcomes of a policy or decision. This is a hallmark of good government.

## References

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